DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 349 SO 033 600

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TITLE	Message Drafted by General Eisenhower in Case the D-Day Invasion Failed and Photographs Taken on D-Day. The Constitution Community: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945).
INSTITUTION	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	14p.; Photographic images may not reproduce clearly.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Archives and Records Administration, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20408. Tel: 866-325-7208 (Toll Free); e-mail: inquire@nara.gov; For full text: http://www.nara.gov/education/cc/main.html.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Foreign Countries; Primary Sources; Secondary Education; Social Studies; Teacher Developed Materials; *United States History; *World War II
IDENTIFIERS	Congress; D Day; *Eisenhower (Dwight D); France; National Civics and Government Standards; National History Standards; United States Constitution

ABSTRACT

Planning for "Operation Overlord" had been under way for about a year when General Dwight Eisenhower, commander of all the Allied forces in Europe, was ordered in February 1944 to invade the continent. Thousands of troops from the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, and other nations were assembled in southern England and trained for the complicated amphibious action against Normandy (France). In addition to the troops, supplies, ships, and planes also were gathered. The three primary source documents used in this lesson, two D-Day photographs and a message drafted by Eisenhower in case the invasion failed, deal with the Normandy invasion. The lesson relates to Article I, Section 8, Paragraphs 11 through 16, of the U.S. Constitution which grants Congress the power to declare war and provide for and regulate a military force. The unit also addresses the success of the military force on D-Day. The lesson correlates to the National History Standards and to the National Standards for Civics and Government. It presents the historical background of the Normandy invasion (with six resources); and suggests diverse teaching activities for classroom implementation, including brainstorming/group discussion, document analysis, research projects, class discussion, creative writing, oral history, and a student research paper. Appended are a written document analysis worksheet and the primary source documents. (BT)

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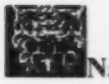

National Archives and Records Administration

THE CONSTITUTION COMMUNITY

The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Message Drafted by General Eisenhower in Case the D-Day Invasion Failed and Photographs Taken on D-Day

By David Traill

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2000

The Constitution Community is a partnership between classroom teachers and education specialists from the National Archives and Records Administration. We are developing lessons and activities that address constitutional issues, correlate to national academic standards, and encourage the analysis of primary source documents. The lessons that have been developed are arranged according to historical era.

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Message Drafted by General Eisenhower in Case the D-Day Invasion Failed and Photographs Taken on D-Day

Constitutional Connection

Article I, Section 8, Paragraphs 11 through 16 , of the U.S. Constitution grant Congress the power to declare war and provide for and regulate a military force. This lesson addresses the success of such a force on D-Day.

This lesson correlates to the National History Standards.

Era 8 -The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

- **Standard 3B** -Demonstrate understanding of World War II and how the Allies prevailed.

This lesson correlates to the National Standards for Civics and Government.

Standard III.B.2. -Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic and foreign policy.

Standard IV.A.2. -Explain how nation-states interact with each other.

Standard IV.C.2. -Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the effects of significant international political developments on the United States and other nations.

Cross-curricular Connections

Share this lesson with your history, government, and language arts colleagues.

List of Documents

1. "In case of failure"message drafted by General Dwight D. Eisenhower before the D-Day invasion.

2. Photograph of equipment in England titled "Ready and waiting for D-Day."

3. Photograph of D-Day action titled "Into the Jaws of Death U.S. Troops wading through water and Nazi gunfire."

Historical Background

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill were responsible for leading their nations to victory and jointly planned strategies for the cooperation and eventual success of the Allied armed forces. Roosevelt and Churchill had already agreed early in the war that Germany must be stopped first if success was to be attained in the Pacific. They were repeatedly urged by Stalin to open a "second front" that would alleviate the enormous pressure that Germany's military was exerting on Russia. Large amounts of Soviet territory had been seized by the Germans, and the Soviet population had suffered terrible casualties from the relentless drive towards Moscow. Roosevelt and Churchill promised to invade Europe, but they could not deliver on their promise until many hurdles were overcome.

Initially, the United States had far too few soldiers in England for the Allies to mount a successful cross-channel operation. Additionally, invading Europe from more than one point would make it harder for Hitler to re-supply and reinforce his divisions. In July 1942 Churchill and Roosevelt decided on the goal of occupying North Africa as a springboard to a European invasion from the south. In November American and British forces under the command of U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower landed at three ports in French Morocco and Algeria. This surprise seizure of Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers came less than a week after the decisive British victory at El Alamein. The stage was set for the expulsion of the Germans from Tunisia in May 1943, the Allied invasion of Sicily and Italy later that summer, and the main assault on France the following year.

Because of this success, Eisenhower was named commander of all Allied forces in Europe in 1943. When in February 1944 he was ordered to invade the continent, planning for "Operation Overlord" had been under way for about a year. Hundreds of thousands of troops from the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, and other nations were assembled in southern England and intensively trained for the complicated amphibious action against Normandy. In addition to the troops, supplies, ships, and planes were also gathered. One photograph featured with this lesson (Document 2) shows some of the equipment that was stockpiled in this manner. Countless details about weather,

topography, and the German forces in France had to be learned before Overlord could be launched in 1944.

General Eisenhower's experience and the Allied troops' preparations were finally put to the test on the morning of June 6, 1944. An invasion force of 4,000 ships, 11,000 planes, and nearly three million soldiers, marines, airmen, and sailors was assembled in England for the assault. Eisenhower's doubts about success in the face of a highly-defended and well-prepared enemy led him to consider what would happen if the invasion of Normandy failed. If the Allies did not secure a strong foothold on D-Day, they would be ordered into a full retreat, and he would be forced to make public the message he drafted for such an occasion (Document 1).

As the attack began, Allied troops did confront formidable obstacles. Germany had thousands of soldiers dug into bunkers, defended by artillery, mines, tangled barbed wire, machine guns, and other hazards to prevent landing craft from coming ashore. Document 3 featured with this lesson shows some of the ferocity of the attack they faced. About 4,900 U.S. troops were killed on D-Day, but by the end of the day 155,000 Allied troops were ashore and in control of 80 square miles of the French coast. Eisenhower's letter was not needed, because D-Day was a success, opening Europe to the Allies and a German surrender less than a year later.

Resources

Ambrose, Stephen E. *D-Day, June 6, 1944* . New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Bliven, Bruce, Jr. *The Story of D-Day* . New York: Random House, 1956.

Eisenhower, David. *Eisenhower at War 1943-1945* . New York: Random House,1986.

Leckie, Robert. *The Wars of America Vol. II* . New York: Harper-Perennial,1992.

Sulzberger, C.L. *The American Heritage Picture History of World War II* . American Heritage Publishing Co., 1966.

Thompson, R.W. *D-Day: Spearhead of Invasion* . New York: Ballantine Books, 1977.

Teaching Activities

Brainstorming/ Group Discussion

1. Distribute copies of the two photographs to your students. Prompt students to list all of the materials that would have been needed for soldiers to invade the beaches of Normandy by studying the photograph. They might include personal items, such as rifles, socks, or helmets. Some might wish to include the supporting items, such as artillery, planes, or other items that were used once the soldiers got ashore, or landing craft and

battleships offshore. Ask students how much effort and planning would therefore be needed to plan a secret invasion such as D-Day.

Document Analysis

2. Explain to students that it was important for the Allies to be not only materially prepared for D-Day, but also emotionally prepared. Ask students to imagine how General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commander of the Allied forces in Europe, felt the night before the attack. Distribute copies of Document 1 to students. Ask one student to read it aloud as the others follow along. Ask: What type of document is it? What is the date of the document? Who wrote the document? What is the purpose of the document? How does the document make you feel? Does the document surprise you? Lead the class in oral responses to the questions.(Note: TheWritten Document Analysis Worksheet is also available.)

Research

3. Divide students into small groups and direct them to conduct research using library and Internet resources to find out what strategies were employed on D-Day and what the results of D-Day were. Direct each group to present their findings in either a five-minute news report or a written newspaper article or a map. Discuss with students why D-Day is considered an important turning point in the war.

Class Discussion

4. Redirect student attention to the first photograph, "Ready and Waiting for D-Day." Lead a class discussion about why images such as this one were possibly censored during World War II.

5. Redirect student attention to Eisenhower's letter . Lead a class discussion about the qualities and responsibilities of a leader. Ask students to what extent they think circumstances affect levels of responsibility. For example, ask students to consider whether very serious circumstances require a greater sense of responsibility on the part of a leader.

Creative Writing

6. Assign students to write a 1- or 2-page journal entry from the perspective of a soldier depicted in the second photograph, "Into the Jaws of Death U.S. Troops wading through water and Nazi gunfire." As the students write, dim the lights in the room and project the photograph using an overhead projector.

Oral History

7. Invite community members who were alive during World War II to your class to discuss D-Day's impact on their lives. Prior to their arrival, instruct each student to write

three questions to ask the visitors during the interview session. For example, students might ask visitors to compare their memories with the depictions shown in the featured documents and other accounts students discovered while doing their research for Activity 3. Videotape the session for later viewing. (You may wish to keep a copy, and make other copies for your guests and the local historical society.)

Research Paper

8. Assign students to write a research paper on the effects of D-Day on the remainder of World War II in Europe.

The documents included in this project are from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library. They are available online through the National Archives Information Locator(NAIL) database <http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html>, control numbers NLE-EPRE-PRIN-BUTCHER-BD6744(2)-ICFN,NLR-PHOCO-7298, and NLR-PHOCO-65592(28). NAIL is a searchable database that contains information about a wide variety of NARA holdings across the country. You can use NAIL to search record descriptions by keywords or topics and retrieve digital copies of selected textual documents, photographs, maps, and sound recordings related to thousands of topics.

This article was written by David Traill, a teacher at South Fork High School in Stuart, FL.

Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one):

___ Newspaper	___ Map	___ Advertisement
___ Letter	___ Telegram	___ Congressional record
___ Patent	___ Press release	___ Census report
___ Memorandum	___ Report	___ Other

2. UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):

___ Interesting letterhead	___ Notations
___ Handwritten	___ "RECEIVED" stamp
___ Typed	___ Other
___ Seals	

3. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT: _____

4. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT: _____

POSITION (TITLE): _____

5. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN? _____

_____

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)

A. List three things the author said that you think are important:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. Why do you think this document was written?

_____

_____

C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

_____

_____

D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written:

_____

_____

E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document:

_____

_____

Designed and developed by the
Education Staff, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408.

Our landings in the Cherbourg – Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. ~~from the positions~~ My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that ~~could be done~~ Bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.

July 5

Document 1: "In case of failure" message drafted by General Dwight D. Eisenhower before the D-Day invasion.

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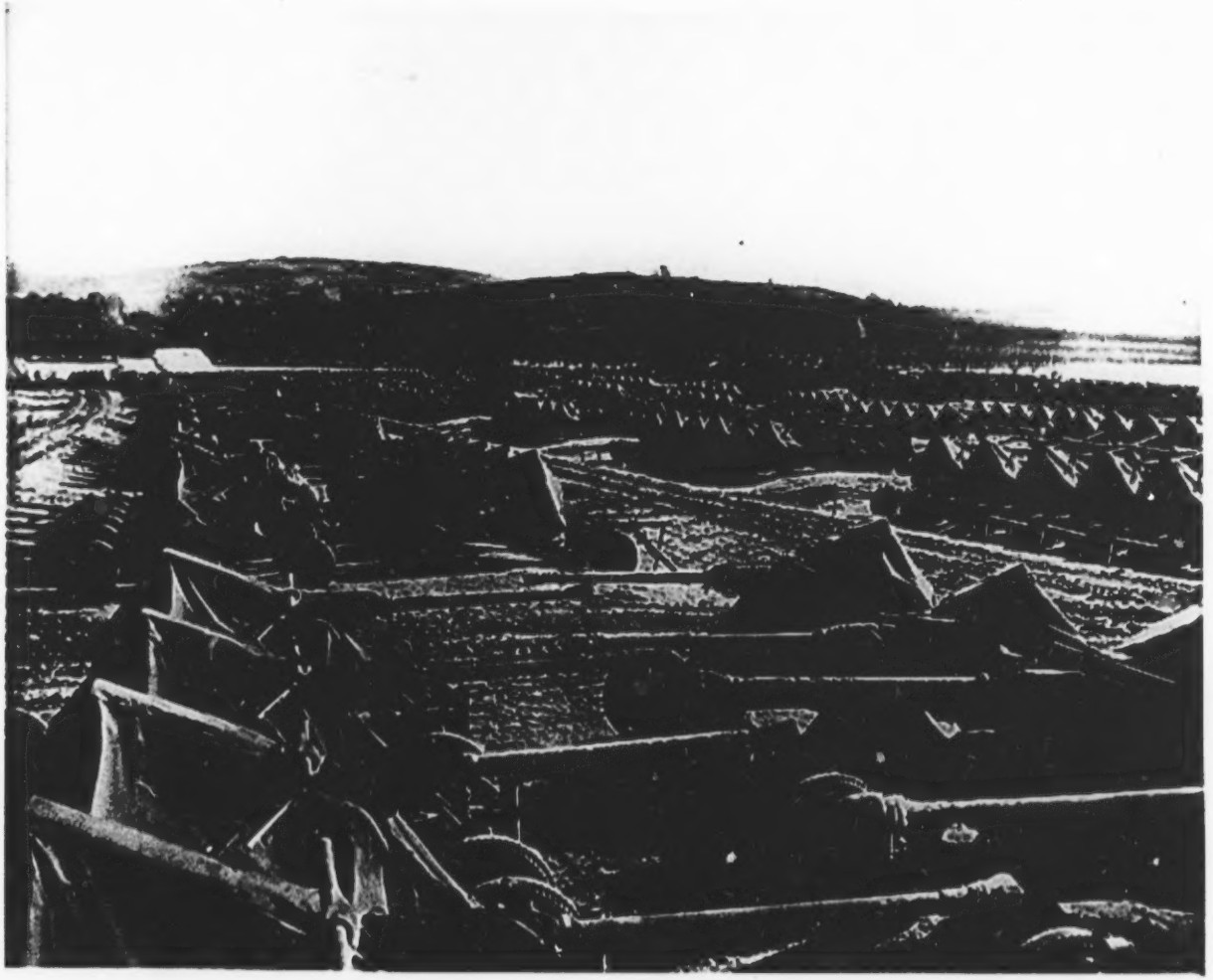
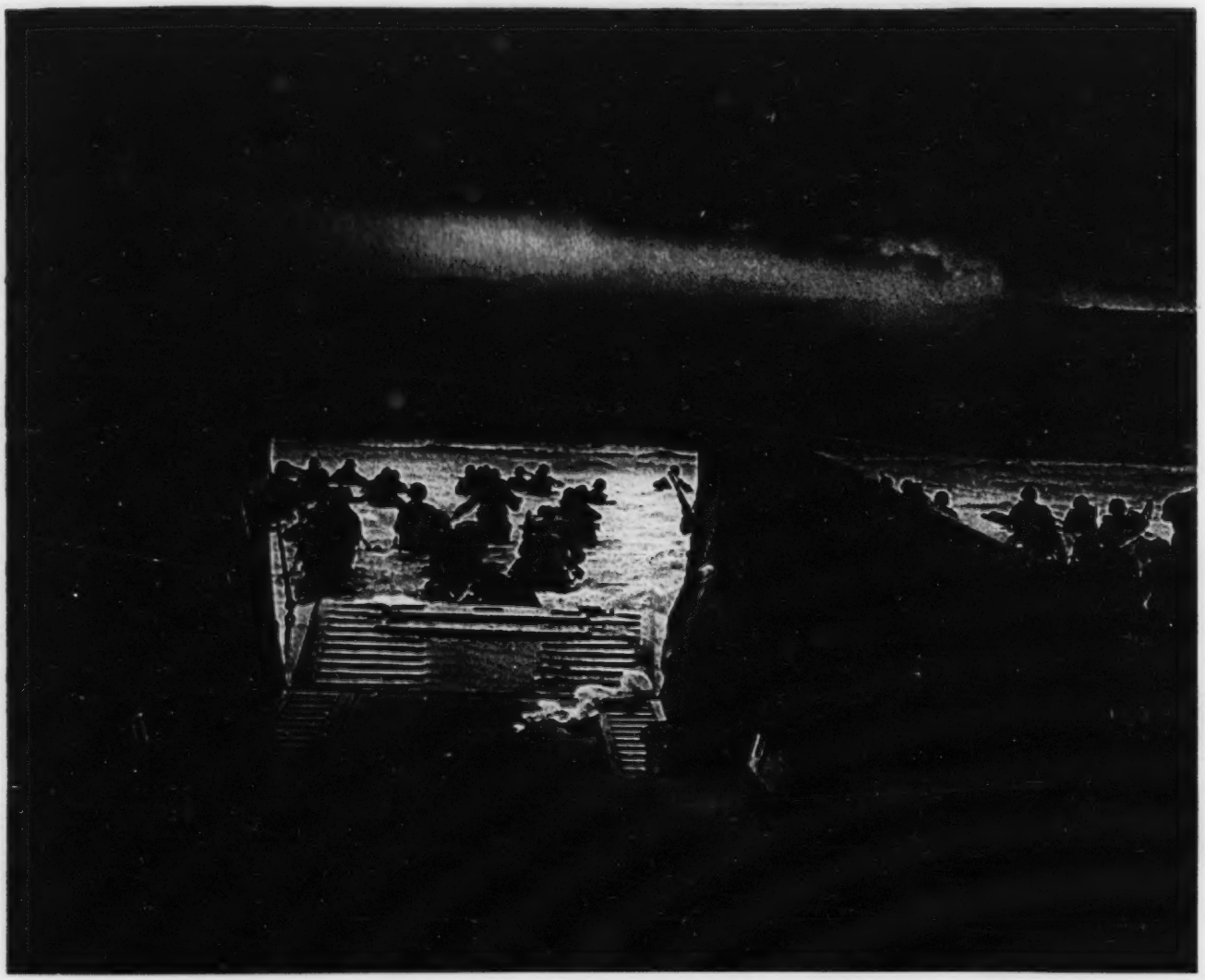


Document 2: Photograph of equipment in England titled "Ready and waiting for D-Day."



Document 3: Photograph of D-Dayaction titled "Into the Jaws of Death U.S. Troops wading through water and Nazi gunfire."